

From: xela@MIT.EDU@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 1:41pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I am writing to oppose the proposed settlement of the Microsoft Antitrust case. As a computer systems manager I have been buying Microsoft products for my users for years --- not because they were good, which they generally aren't, but because there was no practical choice. I read Judge Jackson's findings of fact with great interest, and when I was done reading them was hopeful, for the first time in many years, that the computer industry had a chance to become competitive and innovative again. The findings of fact describe a repeated, continuous practice of egregious anticompetitive behavior.

The findings, along Microsoft's behavior in the trial court and all of its history make it clear that Microsoft's rapaciousness cannot be reined in save by the strongest measures. People far better informed than I have pointed out repeatedly that Microsoft stifles innovation across large swathes of the software industry. In the absence of competition, Microsoft has never felt any need to engage in good engineering practice, and their products have been vulnerable to the likes of code red, nimda and sircam as the result. In a competitive market, those viruses wouldn't even make the front page, let alone pose the serious threats to the economy and to national security. The findings of fact provide a solid basis for the Department of Justice to pursue a judgement that would restore competition to the software industry, which would in turn reduce the security risks posed by software monoculture. Yet the The Department of Justice's proposed settlement is barely a slap on the wrist. I realize it is impossible for a bureaucracy, but the Department of Justice should be ashamed; it has not only failed in its duty in this matter, it has abdicated it.

I am a co-signer of Dan Kegel's letter, and you may find my criticisms of specific elements of the proposal there. The point I wish to make here is that the entire offer is barely worth grossly inadequate.

Carl Alexander
Watertown, Massachusetts
carlmsdj@terc.edu